



**NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S**  
*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™*

**Helping Hand™**

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

## **Masculinizing Hormone Therapy**

Hormone therapy can help people with gender dysphoria feel more at home in their bodies. Like other medicines, hormone therapy has benefits and risks. When taken correctly, hormone therapy can improve mental health and quality of life. Your health care team will work with you to get a personal and family medical history before you start hormone therapy. They will work with you to make sure these medicines are taken safely so you can get the greatest benefit with the least risk.

### **Hormone therapy**

Hormone therapy is when you take medicine to change the levels of sex hormones in your body. Changing these levels will affect your:

- hair growth
- body shape changes
- voice pitch
- muscle mass

Masculinizing hormone therapy is used to align your gender identity and body.

### **Testosterone**

Testosterone is a sex hormone. It is the medicine used in masculinizing hormone therapy. It works in the tissues of the body and causes changes such as:

- voice deepening
- increased hair growth
- increased muscle mass

You can get testosterone as a shot, cream, gel or skin patch. Oral testosterone is not used. The dose of testosterone needed is different from person to person. The dose depends on things like personal health and how your body responds to testosterone.

## Changes on hormone therapy

When you take masculinizing hormone therapy, changes are gradual and can continue over several years. The amount of change and time it takes is different for each person. Factors that impact this include:

- genetics
- health status
- age
- dose

Just because the changes do not happen fast, does not mean that the medicine is not working. Your health care team will work with you to make sure that doses are safe, effective and meet your medical goals.

Many changes caused by masculinizing hormone therapy can be reversed. This means if you stop taking the medicine, the changes will stop, and your body will return to how it was before you started the medicine. However, there are some changes that may not be reversed.

Hormone therapy may impact fertility. This is individual for each patient and will be discussed further with your health care team.

## How long changes take

These are average time ranges for expected onset and full effects. However, everyone's body responds to medicines in its own way.

Effect	Expected Onset	Expected Maximum Effect	Can it be Reversed?
Oily skin and acne	1-6 months	1-2 years	Yes
Facial and body hair growth	3-6 months	3-5 years	No
Scalp hair loss	Less than 12 months	Varies	No
Increased muscle mass and strength	6-12 months	2-5 years	Yes
Body fat changes	variable	2-5 years	Yes
Menstrual periods stop	variable	-	Yes
Deepened voice	3-12 months	1-2 years	No
Clitoral growth	3-6 months	1-2 years	No
Thinning and drying of vaginal lining	3-6 months	1-2 years	Possible

\*Adapted from WPATH Guidelines

## **Risks**

We respect that making the decision to start hormone therapy is a complex process for you and your family. Like all medicines, there are risks connected with masculinizing hormone therapy. There may also be long-term risks that are not yet known. Your health care team can help you understand all of the risks connected with these medicines.

- These medicines should be taken as prescribed.
- Taking more medicine than directed will not speed up the transitioning process and can increase health-related risks.
- You must have regular lab tests and follow-up visits with all members of your team to make sure you are safe.
- Hormone therapy does not prevent pregnancy. If you do not wish to become pregnant, use protection.

## **Safety**

Testosterone therapy is safe and has been used in masculinizing hormone regimens for a long time. Talk with your healthcare team about the risks and benefits of testosterone. They will make a treatment plan created just for you.